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Chairman: Mr. HOLOHAN (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 1.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 87: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (A/50/21, A/50/462)

1. Mr. VALLE (Brazil) was pleased that the Department of Public Information had recourse to more modern technologies and that the resources of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library were accessible through electronic networks. He also welcomed the improvement in relations between the United Nations Correspondents Association and the Department. Such factors would help to strengthen transparency.

2. The Department played an important role in disseminating information about major United Nations conferences. He expressed appreciation concerning its cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in organizing seminars to promote pluralistic and varied media. The Department also fulfilled an essential task in disseminating objective information concerning the peace process in the Middle East and assistance to the Palestinian people.

3. The network of United Nations information centres should be strengthened, particularly in the developing countries, where access to information by the media was difficult. The Department of Public Information should promptly address the imbalances in the allocation of resources to the information centres throughout the world. The integration of information centres with United Nations field offices should be pursued on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the host Governments. The functional independence and integral fulfilment of the respective mandates of each entity should also be guaranteed.

4. Publications should be cost-effective, timely and issued in response to real needs. While information programmes contributed to the success of peace-keeping operations, the Department should exercise caution and cooperate with the departments concerned, since those operations pursued their own public information policies.

5. With a view to ensuring that the new information and communication order became a reality, he called on Member States to present their views on ways and means of furthering international cooperation in the areas of communication infrastructure and capabilities, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/38 B.

6. Mr. ALLAREY (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the flow of information left much to be desired: due to scant resources and the inadequate transfer of technology, many developing countries lacked information, whereas the developed world suffered from a surfeit. Information played a crucial role in all areas, from sustainable development to peace-keeping to the environment. It was therefore imperative that the developing and least developed countries should have access to the new information technologies; in that respect, it was of the utmost importance to develop training opportunities for journalists and strengthen existing programmes, particularly those under the aegis of the Department of Public

Information and UNESCO. The North-South dialogue and South-South cooperation should also serve as a framework for restoring the information balance.

7. Given that they regarded development questions as a priority, the Group of 77 and China reiterated their request for resumption of the publication and dissemination of Development Forum or an alternative. They also endorsed the need to maintain and strengthen the network of United Nations information centres by providing them with the human and operational wherewithal to enable them to disseminate accurate and objective information about the activities and achievements of the United Nations. The integration of information centres with the field offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the host Governments.

8. Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that it was the common desire of all the peoples of the world to build a free and peaceful world and that information could play an important role in achieving that objective. The modern technologies, however, remained in the hands of the developed countries and served their interests in spreading their doctrines. It was therefore vital to restore balance and equality in that respect and to establish a new world information and communication order, particularly through regional and South-South cooperation. The non-aligned countries had already made concerted efforts in that direction, one example being the fourth Conference of Ministers of Information of the Non-Aligned Countries at Pyongyang in 1993. The People's Democratic Republic of Korea intended to pursue that path by strengthening its national information system and cooperating with United Nations bodies and information organs in other countries. Its admission as a full member of the Committee on Information reflected its will to give its due contribution to international information activities.

9. Mr. AL-HAJ (Qatar) said that, through information, the world had become a global village. Accordingly, the fear that the developed countries would dominate the scene entirely had created the call within the United Nations and other international forums for the establishment of a new international information order that was more equitable and balanced.

10. The information slogan used in Qatar was: freedom, credibility and responsibility. The free flow of information allowed the country to stay in touch with the outside world. For that reason, Qatar rejected disinformation campaigns directed against the Gulf region. Information should be objective, to which end reliable sources should be used, without surrender to prejudices or dubious political considerations. In that respect, the United Nations should make efforts to establish a new information order that could help the developing countries to retain their cultural identity, which should go hand in hand with the technological progress currently under way.

11. To that end, training programmes for journalists and other information specialists should be organized, in which connection the Department of Public Information could lend valuable assistance. It was also necessary to exchange technical capabilities and create regional and interregional links, as well as to strengthen those already in existence. In that context, Qatar welcomed the opening of a United Nations information centre in Sana'a that would cover the region.

12. Mr. DOUGLAS (United States of America) said that the first step in the process of preparing the United Nations for the twenty-first century was to restructure the bureaucracy. Quoting Ambassador Albright, he affirmed that the Department could be scaled back considerably without harm to its essential mandates if it endeavoured to rationalize its resources as much as possible. Questions should therefore be asked as to what extent each activity contributed to the core purpose of the United Nations.

13. Accordingly, if the United Nations information centres fulfilled their functions inefficiently or were not cost-effective, consideration should be given to outsourcing those functions to university libraries or private institutions. The question arose whether the Dag Hammarskjöld Library provided a useful resource for the Secretariat and Member States and whether its publishing schedule matched its set guidelines; an independent consultant should be brought in to examine its objectives and current structure and make recommendations for a reform blueprint. In connection with the Department of Public information itself, new technologies such as the Internet and the World Wide Web should enable it to reduce considerably the demand for staff travel.

14. Mr. TALPUR (Pakistan) said that the end of the cold war and rapid advances in the field of information and communications created an opportunity for the developing and the developed countries to work as partners in pursuit of their common objective of a new, more balanced and more equitable world information and communication order. That new order would facilitate the transfer of technology from the developed to the developing countries, the sharing of professional expertise and a two-way flow of information, which, in turn, would lead to greater harmony and better understanding between societies with diverse cultural and social values and would help remove the disparities currently holding back the third world.

15. Pakistan believed that, if those disparities persisted, they would be detrimental to the maintenance of peace and stability in the world. It therefore commended the Department of Public Information on its work and stressed that its resources should be strengthened.

16. The Pakistani Government and people, which had passed through a dark period of martial law and censorship, were only too aware of the importance of a free press and of the freedom of expression, as established in the Charter and also in the Pakistani Constitution. All the newspapers which, for the previous 30 years, had been under direct government control had been privatized. The Government was also taking measures to transform the Pakistani television and radio broadcasting companies into fully autonomous institutions. Foreign news agencies had complete freedom and international television networks like CNN and the BBC were now easily available to Pakistani viewers.

17. His delegation supported the Department's work relating to the dissemination of information on peace-keeping operations and development, but believed that more should be done to disseminate objective information on human rights violations occurring in various parts of the world, such as Bosnia, Rwanda and the State of Kashmir, which had been occupied by more than one million Indian troops and placed under a reign of terror.

18. Pakistan welcomed the initiative by the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information to create an inter-departmental working group on media strategies for peace-keeping and other field operations. If those operations were to succeed, it was vital that information on them should be disseminated in a more sustained manner, both in the countries, where they were conducted as well as in the troop-contributing countries, in order to raise public awareness.

19. Pakistan believed that the United Nations information centres had a crucial role in promoting a positive image of the Organization and in raising awareness of its activities, particularly in the developing countries where the media had limited access to information. The independence of those centres was indispensable to their effective functioning.

20. While the principle of cost-effectiveness should clearly be applied in the area of publications, sight should not, however, be lost of the Organization's objectives, and he therefore regretted that Development Forum had ceased publication. Efforts should also be made to upgrade the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, which played a very useful role in the area of education and the dissemination of knowledge.

21. Pakistan welcomed the spirit of consensus which had prevailed in the Committee on Information and very much hoped that the two draft resolutions contained in the report (A/50/21) would be adopted by consensus.

22. Mr. ZEGHIB (Algeria) said that, at a time when the information potential was bringing down frontiers between nations and cultures, more than 1,500 attacks on the freedom of the press were still recorded in the world every year. The freedom to disseminate and receive information was under particular threat in Algeria, where the profession of journalist had become one of the most dangerous in the world. Journalists, accused of being lackeys of the regime, had become the primary target of fundamentalist terrorism. They refused to surrender, however, and were supported in their determination to inform and to bear witness by UNESCO and other international organizations.

23. In view of the role played by information in international public relations, it was essential to establish a new world information order based on a better flow of information and an equitable distribution of communications resources, both of which depended on the effective transfer of technology and a genuine desire for international cooperation. The United Nations should take its message to all parts of the world and heed the opinions of all, so as to give its activities greater transparency and to ensure a stronger commitment to its aims. For that reason, on the one hand, use should be made of all the resources of modern communications and, on the other, support should be given to the United Nations information centres by providing them with the resources necessary for the performance of their mandate; the incorporation of those liaison centres in the field offices of other United Nations agencies should be considered on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the Governments of the host countries, and should not compromise their functional autonomy.

24. Mr. BADRDDIN (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his country considered information to be an instrument of understanding and dialogue between peoples, of peace, of development and of social, cultural and economic progress. While

information was a key factor in confidence-building between peoples and States, it must be recognized that the world media were neither objective nor impartial and that certain developed countries manipulated them so as to propagate their own ideologies and cultural values and to use them as a means of disseminating disinformation for the promotion of their own interests.

25. The orchestrated media campaign against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which aimed to represent his country to world public opinion as a terrorist State, was a good illustration of that state of affairs. Thus, even though it had been established that Libya was in no way implicated in the attack on a nightclub in West Berlin, the United States had offered neither excuses nor reparations for their bombing raids in 1986. Quite the reverse: they were using all their information resources to discredit Libya, maintaining, even before the courts had pronounced their verdict, that two Libyan nationals had been implicated in the Lockerbie affair.

26. While there were grounds to welcome the efforts made by the Department of Public Information regarding the issues of international peace and security, it was equally important for the Department to give more attention to issues of economic and social development and to raise public awareness of such priority issues as the elimination of colonialism, the question of Palestine, the protection of the environment, the aftermath of war and the possible consequences, in international politics, of recourse by the great Powers to economic sanctions and embargoes.

27. The United Nations and, in particular, the Department of Public Information, should organize training courses for journalists and other media specialists from developing countries and should strengthen its cooperation with the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries. In that context, Libya stressed the need to strengthen the United Nations information centres but cautioned against their incorporation in UNDP field offices without first notifying host countries and without prior consultation.

28. Mr. TUCKER (Bahamas) welcomed the strengthening of the role of the United Nations information centres and supported the Jamaican proposal to appoint an information officer to the UNDP Office in Jamaica, which had made a valuable contribution to keeping the region informed of the activities of the United Nations.

29. He also wished to commend the Department for the efficiency and excellence of the Caribbean Radio Unit. Its broadcasts had been the best means of keeping the Bahamian public apprised of the work of the Organization. In that context the work of the Caribbean Regional Centre located in Port-of-Spain also deserved continued support.

30. Cooperation between DPI and the specialized agencies of the United Nations must remain a key component of the Department's efforts to promote its objectives, and he therefore welcomed the initiative taken by the Department to cooperate more closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

31. His delegation also wished to stress the important role that the information programmes and activities of the Department must continue to play in contributing to the success of the Organization's peace-keeping operations, particularly by forming a positive climate of world opinion with regard to such operations both in the troop-contributing countries and in the countries where the missions had been deployed. The Department should also become increasingly involved at the very earliest planning stages of such missions.

32. Communication remained an important tool to help people attain their political, socio-economic and cultural objectives and shape the world of the future. For Member States which did not possess advanced technology DPI had continued to prove a valuable source of information. States Members in a position to do so should continue to support the work of that body.

33. Mr. SAMADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the exchange of views on the topic, disparities in technology and resources between developed and developing countries persisted and the flow of information was one-sided; developed countries enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the gathering and dissemination of information through their technological advantages. That was why his delegation had always supported the establishment of a new, just and more balanced world communication order. Moreover the international community should provide financial contributions and technological support for the developing countries so as to allow for a two-way exchange of information and the establishment of genuine dialogue.

34. Although DPI had clearly taken advantage of electronic communications and the information superhighway to disseminate information on the work of the United Nations, consideration should be given to the fact that owing to a lack of infrastructure, the beneficiaries had been confined to a restricted group of advanced States. DPI should refrain from concentrating on just certain aspects of the activities of the United Nations and should pay due attention to the Organization's commitment to promote economic development and eradicate colonialism by giving the necessary publicity to its activities in that field.

35. In conclusion, he wished to emphasize the importance of the role of the United Nations information centres and welcomed the reactivation of the United Nations Centre in Tehran.

36. Mr. ZVONKO (Belarus) said that information was an integral part of socio-economic and cultural change and an important instrument of progress and democratization. It was therefore essential for all States to enjoy equal access to information.

37. His delegation welcomed the innovative measures that had been implemented to streamline the work of the entire United Nations system in the field of information. Belarus believed in the importance of strengthening the operation of United Nations information centres and information units in United Nations offices in countries which had recently become independent and countries in transition because such centres were an essential link between the Organization and its Member States and helped to win over international public opinion to the information policy pursued by the United Nations. With specific regard to countries in transition, that objective could be accomplished by providing their

centres' libraries with socio-economic materials and developing information exchanges between the centres and ministries of foreign affairs, national depositary libraries and United Nations associations in host countries.

38. While supporting in principle the integration of information centres into UNDP field offices, Belarus nevertheless considered that such integration should be decided on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Governments concerned, taking into account the conditions peculiar to each country. In that context Belarus commended the information unit in the United Nations integrated office in Minsk on the excellent results it had achieved in establishing constructive dialogue between the Organization and administrative services and organizations in Belarus.

39. His delegation wished to stress the exceptional importance both for its own country and for the whole international community of the information activities associated with the accident at the Chernobyl power station, the tenth anniversary of which would be observed on 26 April 1996. That was why Belarus wished to propose a programme of information activities specially tailored to the event. Such activities could form part of a week-long commemoration of the Chernobyl tragedy organized at United Nations Headquarters, involving a number of different events. He hoped that DPI would give as much publicity as possible to any such activities. For its part, the Republic of Belarus would afford the Department all possible assistance in putting the finishing touches to the events to be organized in connection with that sad anniversary.

40. Ms. SHANKAYA (Zambia) said that the tremendous increase in information dissemination between the Organization and its Member States had been due to the smooth running of the Department of Public Information and the partnerships it had been able to build with the media and other key groups all over the world. However, the Department needed to intensify its efforts so as to ensure the creation of conditions that would enable developing countries to have communications technology suited to their national needs, which would in turn promote telecommunications links at the subregional, regional and international levels. The Department had clearly taken the lead in spreading a message of peace and development which had been vitally important at a time when the world had been riven by all manner of conflicts.

41. Given the onerous responsibilities under which many national governments laboured, her delegation applauded the decision contained in paragraph 22 of the Secretary-General's report A/50/462 concerning the need to keep the community of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) informed of the Department's activities, specifically through weekly information briefings, the DPI/NGO Link newsletter which contained information on events taking place at Headquarters, and the NGO Resource Centre where associated NGOs could access United Nations documents and DPI publications.

42. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had continued to assume greater responsibilities in addressing social, economic and humanitarian problems. In Zambia, for instance, they had proved very effective in transmitting relevant information to the rural population and in raising awareness of numerous issues, particularly on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing.

43. Given the increasing importance of peace-keeping operations, her delegation wholeheartedly commended the decision by the Department to publish the Blue Books Series intended to describe in a single volume the vital role played by the United Nations in peace-keeping and enable the public at large to become well informed about the responsibilities and successes of the Organization.

44. Since the year 1966 had been designated International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, emphasis should be placed on the report of the Secretary-General on an agenda for development, and on the dissemination of information that would enable the international community to deal with the scourge of poverty.

45. Zambia was very grateful to the Department of Public Information for the facilities put at its disposal through the United Nations Information Centre in Lusaka, which also served several other countries in the subregion. Unfortunately, that office had been without a director for a long time, which affected its performance.

46. Lastly, her delegation was not in favour of integrating United Nations information centres with local UNDP offices, since UNDP was already overburdened and could under no circumstances assume further responsibilities.

47. Mr. DOUDECH (Tunisia) said that information was an important tool in meeting the challenges of the day, and that it was necessary, because of the information gap between developed and developing countries, to increase international cooperation resulting in the transfer of technology in order to help developing countries to have control over information. His delegation welcomed the Department of Public Information's policy of partnership with the media and groups influential at the national level. He noted with satisfaction that the Department had given high priority to covering development activities. In that respect particular attention should be given to the situation in Africa, and the publication Africa Recovery should appear more frequently. The Department played an important role in raising awareness in the international community of issues discussed at world conferences with a view to mobilizing individuals and generating the political support necessary for the implementation of the plans of action formulated by such conferences. With reference to the efforts made by the Department to give coverage to peace-keeping and other United Nations operations, he welcomed the creation of an interdepartmental working group on information strategies in that field, since those operations needed to have effective information resources available to be able to explain their mandates to the population and counteract the spread of misinformation. His delegation welcomed the seminars organized by the Department of Public Information for developing countries, such as that to be held in Sana'a in the near future on the development and promotion of pluralist media in Arab countries, or the one organized on assistance to the Palestinian people in the information field.

48. Tunisia, which attached great importance to the work of United Nations information centres, welcomed the actions agreed upon in order to rationalize their management and increase their efficiency. With reference to the integration of those centres with UNDP field offices, it was best to proceed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Governments concerned.

49. Mr. BUKURU (Burundi) said that he welcomed the measures taken by the Department of Public Information to take full advantage of modern information technology and reach all targeted groups. The Department should ensure global access to its products, and it was important for it to receive financial support in the implementation of its mandate.

50. The world information order was unbalanced and iniquitous, technological means being used to disseminate hatred and ideologies which were intended to destroy whole communities. Burundi was particularly concerned by broadcasts made by the pirate radio station "Radio Démocratie", which was owned by the National Council for the Defence of Democracy and its armed branch, the Forces for the Defence of Democracy. The radio station was inciting ethnic hatred among the population and attempting to foment an uprising against legitimate government institutions. The broadcasts were received in a large part of the subregion and had the potential to destabilize it. Burundi did not have the technical means necessary to eliminate the radio, which was threatening the national reconciliation process. Having brought the matter before the Security Council, Burundi was asking for the support of the international community, especially of neighbouring countries, in order to maintain its own stability as well as that of other States in the region. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the positive role played by the United Nations information centre in Bujumbura, but repeated its request that the post of director of the centre should be reinstated.

51. Mr. TAKAHASHI (Japan) said that United Nations field operations should be supported by an effective communications system. He noted the value of the Blue Books Series and congratulated the Department of Public Information on its expanded use of electronic networks, recalling that his delegation had made proposals on ways of improving the use of depository libraries at the seventeenth session of the Committee on information. With reference to the role of the Department in formulating a media strategy for peace-keeping and other field operations, his delegation welcomed the establishment of an interdepartmental working group and a roster of personnel. He wished to note that the establishment of priorities and the choice of activities undertaken in priority areas were two separate questions; further, disagreement on activities did not imply that the priorities identified had been rejected. In that context his delegation noted the references made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Information concerning the status of the publication Development Update, and awaited with interest the feasibility study to be undertaken by the Joint United Nations Information Committee on a possible new publication devoted to development matters.

52. His delegation welcomed the multifaceted activities of the Department, described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/462), while pointing out that those activities could only be fully evaluated in the light of their end results. At a time when the United Nations was experiencing financial difficulties, he was grateful that the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information had undertaken to implement an effective public information policy, while streamlining the work of the Department, which had resulted in a 3.2 per cent reduction in resources under the programme budget.

53. Mr. HE Yafei (China) said that in recent years the Department of Public Information had played a very useful role in informing the international community of the efforts made by the United Nations to resolve regional conflicts by peaceful means and to maintain international peace. The integration of information activity with United Nations peace-keeping operations would greatly help to reinforce mutual understanding between the populations of countries involved and United Nations peace-keeping personnel, but it was important to ensure that the wishes of the countries concerned were respected and that differences were settled by consultation. With reference to peace-keeping operations in particular, United Nations information activities should serve the general membership rather than a few countries or groups. Information should therefore be impartial and unbiased in order to maintain the neutrality and fairness of the United Nations.

54. With the strengthening of relations between countries and of their economic interdependence and complementarity, no country could afford to stand aloof from the international community. The United Nations should therefore voice more support for the establishment of new kinds of fair and equitable international economic relations promoting the equality and development of all States. Only by earnestly resolving problems confronting developing countries in such areas as economic development, social stability and the elimination of poverty could there be common prosperity in the world, thereby laying a solid foundation for peace.

55. In order to attain that objective, the United Nations should take practical and effective measures in the field of public information to provide appropriate technical and financial assistance to the developing countries with a view to strengthening their information and communication infrastructure, thereby eliminating their unfavourable position vis-à-vis the other countries and gradually redressing the imbalance in the international information system.

56. Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) said that as a result of the increased involvement of the Organization across a broad spectrum of international relations, from preventive diplomacy to peace enforcement, as well as in various areas of economic and social development, the Department of Public Information had been faced with many challenges. In that regard he commended the efforts by the Department to bring the Organization's mission in the area of peace and development to the attention of public opinion, through, inter alia, the use of such technological innovations as on-line access interactive networks and an audio bulletin board, which provided access to United Nations materials for a very wide audience. He also welcomed the use of CD ROM databases by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. The Department's cooperation with UNESCO in the area of media development was also proving successful. In that regard his delegation looked forward to the holding of the seminar on promoting independent and pluralist Arab media, to be held in January 1996 in Sana'a.

57. The Department of Public Information, through its programmes and publications on Palestine, continued to have an essential role in promoting the ongoing peace process. In that context he welcomed the organization by the Department of the seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development, and the training programme currently being provided for a group of Palestinian journalists. The Organization's programmes and

publications should give more attention to disarmament issues, in particular the question of the denuclearization of the region, so as to stimulate regional and extra-regional awareness of the seriousness of that ongoing issue. He commended the organization by the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Disarmament Affairs, of panel discussions within the framework of disarmament weeks. Wider dissemination of information on United Nations activities would increase openness and transparency and thereby help to combat irresponsible criticism of the Organization.

58. Mr. OMER (Sudan) said that the information revolution, characterized by the rapid development of communications technology and the proliferation of media, had made a global village of the world. However, a gulf had arisen between the countries possessing modern technology and the rest. The great information Powers imposed their points of view and disseminated their ideologies, while those countries that continued to use older communications media struggled to make their cultures and traditions known elsewhere. That disparity was accompanied by disinformation for strategic, political and social ends. The question was related to that of the imposition of behaviour patterns and their dissemination by all available means in disregard of the cultures, traditions and beliefs of other peoples, the information communicated propagating stereotypes and prejudices. Such information also concentrated on the problems and failures of developing countries. The commercial factor had become an end in itself, supplanting the quest for truth and analysis of the causes of those problems and failures.

59. The Department of Public Information had a very important role to play. It must not only promote awareness of the activities of the Organization and the problems of developing countries, but also draw attention to the attainments of those countries so that the international community would not have an erroneous impression of them. He trusted that the Department would help to counter the disinformation campaigns conducted against certain member countries, in particular developing countries. The United Nations Department of Public Information, which had focused on humanitarian crises in different countries and had cooperated in the campaigns against racial discrimination and apartheid, should also promote awareness of certain practices apparent in certain developed countries, such as xenophobia and discrimination to which immigrants fell victim, as well as of the harmful impact of the structural adjustment imposed on developing countries.

60. The Sudan wished to bring the truth to the Sudanese and to every representative of press agencies in the Sudan. To that end press outlets had been established at all levels, notwithstanding which the image of the Sudan abroad was distorted, since certain circles did not want the Sudan to become a model of independence, respecting its social and cultural heritage. It should be noted in that connection that certain humanitarian non-governmental organizations acted in ways calculated to please their headquarters outside the country.

61. The Sudan, an immense multicultural country that shared borders with nine other countries, was a particularly suitable location for a United Nations information centre. He welcomed the efforts of the information centre in

Khartoum and hoped that a director would be appointed without delay, the previous director having left a year earlier.

62. Mr. SANBAR (Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information) said that the Department of Public Information would spare no effort to follow up on the issues raised by delegations. The Department would continue the financial rationalization of its activities and would improve the forms of those activities in response to the challenges it faced. In that regard he counted on the support of all delegations.

63. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolutions A and B, contained in paragraph 52 of document A/50/21, as well as the draft decision contained in paragraph 53 of that document, without a vote. The Committee had thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 87, and the Rapporteur would report thereon directly to the General Assembly.

64. Mr. SOUFIANE (Algeria) spoke on a point of order, and Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.